

Congress Report

Complementary and Alternative Medicine in Clinical Practice. Complementary and Allopathic Medicine: The Hospital as a Place of Possible Integration

December 2–3, 2005, Conference Room, S. Carlo Borromeo Hospital, Milan

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This congress was organized by the Psycho-Somatic Medicine outpatient clinic of S. Carlo Borromeo's Hospital in Milan, and S.I.R.I.U.M. (International Society for Research, Integration and Humanization in Medicine) to promote knowledge about CAM within S. Carlo Borromeo Hospital and other health centers.

CAM was introduced in Lombardia with a regional council resolution in 2000. In his opening speech, Dr Umberto Fazzone (General Manager of Direzione Famiglia e Solidarietà Sociale, Lombardia's Regional Council) recounted the stages of the resolution and reported the progress of the past 5 years. The first step was the observation and evaluation of CAM techniques, informing how some projects for observational trials were drafted through Lombardia's health and social net, to arrive at a characterization of all CAM modalities such as Acupuncture, Phytotherapy, Ayurvedic medicine, Anthroposophic medicine, Homeopathy, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Homotoxicology, Osteopathy and Chiropractic medicine. At present, after observational trials were approved in 2000 (99, 42 ended), 126 have been deemed eligible to receive support loans from the Regional Council to conduct clinical trials as provided in the 2003 resolution.

Next, there was a discussion by the members of the Clinic of Psycho-Somatic Medicine: Dr Luisa Merati (Chief of the Centre) explained the kinds of CAM they practiced (Hypnosis therapy, Homeopathy, Homotoxicology, Bach Flower therapy, Acupuncture, Reflex therapy and Reiki); she also expounded the results of an observational trial: 'Hypnosis as

a CAM practice for tabagism and obesity'. Dr Flavia Barbagelata (Hypnotist, Allergologist) introduced hypnosis in allergology as an integrated therapy at Complementary Medicine Practice (CMP); at the end Dr Barbara Mantellini (Psychosomathist, Homeopathy) explained the final results of an Observational trial about the use of homeopathy to treat headache.

The speakers from S. Carlo Borromeo's Hospital are as follows: Dr Giuseppe Cammarano (Health Chief) discussed Ethical Committee's rule toward CAM. Dr Maurizio Poli (Chief of the Department of Internal Medicine I) discussed his experience in a department of internal medicine with a CMP. Dr Damiano Abbate (Acupuncture) put forward his experience at the Pain Centre; Dr Alberto Vignati (Gynecologist) showed the trial results using acupuncture in footing presentation; Dr Antonino Lania (Physiatrist) discussed analgesic homeo-mesotherapy. Dr Donatella Noè (Nutritionist) introduced the features of personalized nutritional therapy; Dr Antonino Giordano (Nephrologist, Homeopathy) discussed about the introduction of homeopathy/homotoxicology in a department of nephrology. Dr Elena Gandini (Anaesthetist, Hypnotist, Homeopathy) in her speech proposed an integration between homotoxicology and Bach Flower therapy; Dr Manuela Posca (Internist) compared Western semiotics and Traditional Chinese Medical semiotics; Dr Patrizio Piacentini (Hospital's Chemist) examined the cost of CAM's drugs; and at the end, Dr Piero Vigorelli (Psychiatrist) discussed speech therapy for Alzheimer's disease.

Among the non-resident speakers, Prof. Emilio Minelli (Homeopathy, Acupuncture, University of Milan, S.I.R.I.U.M.'s President) discussed acupuncture education at the University. Dr Leonello Milani (Homotoxicology, Homeopathy, AIOT's Vice-President, Milan) explored the historical

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and methodological pathways of clinical-experimental trials, underscoring how it was possible to demonstrate the therapeutic effects of homeopathic drugs. Dr Alberto Laffranchi (Radiologist, Homeopathy, National Institute for Research and Treatment of Cancer, Milan) discussed the results of a trial employing homeopathic drugs against radiotherapy complications; Dr Maurizio Italiano (Homeopathy, Dulcamara School, Genoa, Glasgow Homeopathic Hospital) brought his experience in one of the most important homeopathic hospitals, the Glasgow Homeopathic Hospital. Dr Mauro Saruggia (Homeopathy, S. Gerardo hospital, Monza) explained a hypothesis about how ultra-high doses work in a trial on thermo luminescence. Prof. Francesco Marotta (Gastroenterologist) and Dr Aldo Lorenzetti (Hepatologist) discussed new promising areas where such biotherapeutic approaches may be a better way to treat chronic diseases such as inflammatory bowel diseases, chronic arthritis and liver disease. This would be true for subclinical disorders,

aggravating factors and for aging itself. Prof. Emilio Del Giudice (Physicist) introduced the connections between physics and medicine and possible ultramolecular interactions of homeopathic drug action.

Dr Mara Ramploud (CAM commission at Ordine dei Medici, Milan, S.I.R.I.U.M.'s national secretary) ended the congress with remarks on the integration of complementary and allopathic medicine. Although the weather conditions were bad, with snow on Friday evening, the congress enjoyed much success and the physicians attending it were eagerly interested in CAM's diffusion and development. This demonstrates the necessity of a thorough permeation of CAM at the hospital level and the possibility of integration with allopathic care. All the participants agreed that CAM is not in opposition to allopathic medicine but is an instrument to empower patients to heal. The meeting concluded with strong confidence that it would be the first of a series of meetings to exchange ideas and results of trials.